

Mr. Kent

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16 December 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: NIE 11-8-59: Soviet Capabilities for Strategic Attack Through Mid-1965

1. The only critical issue in NIE 11-8-59 is the estimate regarding the probable Soviet ICBM program. The essential discussion on this point is in Section V, pp. 31-44. This discussion is supported by the general considerations adduced in Section I (pp. 1-4), the requirements calculations summarized in Section IV (pp. 21-30), and the detailed explanations provided in Annexes C, D, and E (pp. 62-98).
2. The Air Force counter-estimate is not comparable to ours and no reconciliation is possible. They are talking in terms of a Soviet ICBM radically different from that estimated by the rest of the Community and proceed on the basis of a radically different estimate of Soviet values and intentions. Please see our briefing note dated 14 December, paras. 1-7 (attached).

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3. The rest of the Community concurs in our estimate. The trouble with State is a vague matter of rhetoric which we have been unable, as yet, to get State to express in reasonable terms. See our 14 December briefing note, para. 8.

4. There are many incidental issues regarding missile launching submarines and bombers which we hope to get cleaned up in a representatives' meeting on Thursday.

LUDWELL MONTAGUE
Member of the Board
National Estimates

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